

APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

Rabbi Schultz explores the numerology associated with Passover and its relationship to our journey to redemption. Page 3

Learn about the B'nai Israel Mental Health Shabbat with speaker Dr. Jennifer Doran on Friday, April 28. Page 4

Rabbi Marion addresses the concept of freedom embodied by the Israelites as they partnered with God in enabling their escape from Egypt. Page 5

Alexa Cohen urges Bonim parents to make the most of their upcoming parent teacher conferences. Page 7

Also Inside

Bulletin Boardpage 2
Shabbat Servicespage 4
Donationspages 8-9
BIFTYpage 16



WELCOME, SCOTT HARRIS, B'NAI ISRAEL'S NEW SENIOR CANTOR



We are very pleased to announce that Scott Harris will be joining Congregation B'nai Israel as our senior cantor on July 1, 2023.

Our Cantorial Search Committee, headed by Anne Kirsch and Jim Greenberg along with our clergy and staff, unanimously

agreed that Scott would be an excellent fit for our synagogue community. Scott is a true mensch in every sense of the word: his passion for Jewish music, for the Jewish people, and for this congregation are truly unmatched. Scott believes in the power of sacred relationships and no doubt from day one will strive to get to know all of the incredible members of our synagogue and inspire us with his lively music, extensive experience, and deep passion for his work.

Scott began his cantorial career right here at Congregation B'nai Israel when he served as a cantorial assistant for Cantor Emeritus Sheri Blum. He grew up in Malden, Massachusetts, where he was actively involved in the URJ youth movement, (NFTY-NE) as a beloved song leader, and where he met his wife, Sharon Manasevit Harris, who grew up

Continued on page 3

JOIN US FOR B'NAI ISRAEL'S SPRING CELEBRATION



*Jim & Lisa
Greenberg*

On Saturday, June 10, we will pay special tribute to longtime Congregation B'nai Israel members Michael & Judy Green Blumenthal and Jim & Lisa Greenberg. All four have been active and valued contributors to our B'nai Israel community in numerous ways, from serving on committees, to leadership positions on our Board of Trustees, to gladly lending a hand in many different capacities whenever called upon over the years.

We are thrilled to be able to gather together in June in celebration of all that our honorees have done and continue to do for our congregation. We also hope to raise funds with a special tribute journal

being produced in their honor. Through the journal, congregants, family, and friends have an opportunity to express appreciation and help ensure our synagogue's continued success. More information and a formal invitation are forthcoming. Plans are underway but if you would like to help prepare for this event, please contact our committee chairs, Liz and Mark Nigrosh (mrnigrosh@gmail.com) or Evelyn Rubak (erubak@gmail.com).

With our community's support, we look forward to making this year's event a festive and fitting tribute to our remarkable honorees.



*Michael & Judy
Green Blumenthal*

WELCOME! WELCOME!

A warm welcome to our newest members. We look forward to their participation in our many programs and hope their affiliation will not only enrich their lives, but that of our congregation.

Matthew & Jennifer Helman and children Gabrielle & Alexis

Easton, CT

Lawrence & Linda Walker

Stratford, CT

Zach & Shannon Schreiber

Fairfield, CT

SHARING OUR JOY...

In celebration of:

Sylvia & Alan Neigher, on the birth of their granddaughter, Marni Charlotte, to parents Leslie Neigher and Greg Kaplan.

Paul & Patricia Buchbinder, on the birth of their granddaughter Abigail Maeve Bookbinder to parents Daniel and Alicia Bookbinder.

**If you would like to list something in Sharing Our Joy, please email the office with any information you would like to share.*

SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of:

Freida G. Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel (Meg Murray).

Gale DuBrow, sister of Laura (Dudley) Orr.

BULLETIN BOARD

MITZVAH MORNINGS

April 30

Location: B'nai Israel

For April's Mitzvah Morning we will be making fleece isolette blankets for The Tiny Miracles Foundation. The blankets will then be distributed to local neonatal intensive care units and families of premature babies.

These blankets protect fragile preemies from the harsh lights and sounds of the hospital, while adding bright color to the NICU. Having a newborn in the NICU is very stressful for families and newborns, but these blankets help alleviate that stress while providing comfort when it is needed most.

This is a great, hands-on mitzvah activity for congregants of all ages. No sewing skills required! Just cutting and knotting fleece — it's easy and fun.

If you have good scissors, please bring them to the event. If not, some will be provided.

Sign up to participate through the link in Hashavua or on the Temple website. Feel free to email Nina Silberman (ninahv@aol.com), or Mitch Weinstein (mitchellew@yahoo.com) with any questions.

May 21, 2023

Our May Mitzvah Morning event is bound to be fun and exciting. For the first time ever, Mitzvah Morning will be teaming up with the B'nai Israel Green Team for a community event.

We will be meeting at 10 a.m. at B'nai Israel and will work together to plant native shrubs, flowers, and bushes on the temple grounds. The goal is two-fold: to make the physical grounds of our synagogue more beautiful and appealing and to further develop the Pollinator Pathway in the Bridgeport area.

Why are Pollinator Pathways important? Pollinators (birds and insects) are critical to the natural ecosystem as they are vital

to plant reproduction and play a very important role in maintaining biodiversity. Pollinators have been threatened in recent years due to overdevelopment of land and heavy use of pesticides and herbicides by homeowners and municipalities. Building and maintaining Pollinator Pathways will help ensure the health and safety of our local pollinators.

What can you do? You can do your part in keeping our ecosystem healthy and vibrant by attending May Mitzvah Morning! You will help feed the pollinators, and you will also learn a lot about the natural world that exists (literally) in our backyards.

If you have garden gloves and garden shovels, feel free to bring them. All ages are welcome.

We hope to see you there!

For more information, please reach out to Nina Silberman (ninahv@aol.com) or Mitch Weinstein (mitchellew@yahoo.com).



JUDAICA SHOP

Passover is here! The first seder is Wednesday, April 5. The Judaica Boutique is fully stocked to make your Passover a beautiful celebration! Please contact the temple office to set up an appointment.



FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

THE PASSOVER SEDER: AN UNFINISHED JOURNEY

If I asked you what number you most associate with the Passover seder, what might you say? I'm guessing you'd respond with the number four. We drink the four cups of wine, we read of the four children, and for some of us, the seder feels like it's four hours until we finally get to the festive meal. And while you might feel quite complete after enjoying four cups of Merlot over a four-hour seder, the number four is actually an incomplete number. The seder is intentionally an unfinished journey.

Let's take a look at two texts that are part of or are associated with the Passover seder. The first is a perhaps familiar one drawn from Deuteronomy:

My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and populous nation. The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us. We cried to God, the God of our ancestors, and God heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression. The Lord took us out of Egypt by a mighty hand, and by signs and portents. (Deut. 26:5-8)

And the second text is from Exodus. The four bolded phrases are the four stages

of redemption, which led us to craft the ritual of the four cups of wine:

*I have now heard the moaning of the Israelites because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Say, therefore, to the Israelite people: I am Adonai. **I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God.** And you shall know that I, Adonai, am your God who freed you from the labors of the Egyptians. (Exodus 6:5-7)*

What is interesting about these two texts is that they are intentionally left incomplete. The Haggadah leaves out the subsequent line of each text. Let's take a look:

God brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. (Deuteronomy 26:9)

I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession, I Adonai. (Exodus 6:8)

What do you notice about both of those texts? They both offer a vision of entering into the Promised Land, the land flowing with milk and honey. So why are those purposely omitted from the Passover Haggadah?

Rabbi Shai Held answers, "The Israelites are promised five stages of redemption, culminating in inheriting the land, but the Torah (and Haggadah) ends before the final promise has been fulfilled. On some level the story the Torah tells is incomplete: The promised destination is still out of reach.... Maybe the Torah wants us to know that the journey is not just a means but also an end in itself. The journey does not merely serve to lead us to the land...The journey can indeed be more significant, and more joyous, than arriving at the destination."

In other words, the seder is about incompleteness, not completeness. We end each year saying, "Next Year in Jerusalem!" We are never quite there. We are always on the journey. And as Rabbi Held teaches, being on that journey may be more significant and more joyous than actually arriving at the destination. May each of us find holiness, joy, and significance at our Passover tables this year. May we all love and be present on the incredible journey! Happy Passover!

WELCOME, SCOTT HARRIS..... FROM P. 1

at B'nai Israel. They lived for many years in Easton and raised their two children, Danny and Sarah, both of whom are Kehilah and Merkaz graduates, at B'nai Israel.

Upon earning his degree from the Academy of Jewish Religion, Scott became the assistant cantor at Temple Israel in Westport where he successfully trained hundreds of B'nai Mitzvah students, led Shabbat, High Holy Day, and life cycle services, and proved to be a passionate, spiritual Jewish professional and clergy partner. Scott served for over a decade on the URJ camp faculty as the head song leader, summer administrator, and *Limud*—Jewish values instructor—for Crane Lake Camp and Six Points Sports Academy. He currently serves as the senior cantor at Temple Beth Hillel in South Windsor.

Scott and Sharon are overjoyed to be returning to B'nai Israel, a place they call their "Jewish home." They are looking forward to reuniting and connecting with you over the summer when we officially welcome them back to our community.

We wish to thank Anne and Jim and our Cantorial Search Committee who worked so hard to listen to the needs, hopes, and aspirations of our professional staff and congregation to find what they are calling the perfect fit for our Congregation B'nai Israel community.



The B'nai Israel Mental Health Group invites you to Mental Health Awareness Shabbat Friday, April 28
Mental Health and You: Depression and Anxiety

A Shabbat evening with Dr. Jennifer Doran, PhD
 6:00–7:00 p.m. Shabbat Service with remarks by Dr. Doran
 7:00–8:00 p.m. Congregational Dinner
 8:00–9:00 p.m. Post-dinner presentation and Q & A with Dr. Doran

Dinner is \$20 per person.
 RSVP to Susie Hallman shallman@cbibpt.org

Friday, April 28, is Mental Health Awareness Shabbat at our congregation, featuring B'nai Israel member and mental health professional Jennifer Doran, PhD, during Shabbat services and

at a discussion after dinner. Dr. Doran will present information on the importance of mental health awareness with a focus on depression and anxiety.

Dr. Doran earned her doctorate degree from the New School for Social Research in NYC and is the current president of the CT Psychological Association (CPA) and co-chair of the CPA's Public Education Committee, an associate director for Mental Health at the VA of CT Telehealth Hub, and an assistant clinical professor in Department of Psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine.

Dr. Doran is actively involved and very passionate about public education, improving mental health access and quality of care, and supporting social justice and diversity initiatives. She is regularly featured in the media, including CT Public Radio and NBC Connecticut. The B'nai Israel Mental Health Group looks forward to sharing a Mental Health Shabbat with you and your family and friends. Please RSVP to Susie Hallman at shallman@cbibpt.org.

SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

In person on Fridays at 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 8:00 a.m. where indicated.
 All services at this time can also be viewed on Zoom. The link is sent out in our weekly email.

Friday, March 31

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
 Torah Portion – Tzav, Leviticus 6:1-8:36
 Haftarah – Malachi 3:4-24

Saturday, April 1

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person
 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom
 11:00 a.m. Bat Mitzvah of Rebecca Aldredge, daughter of Betsy & Marcus Aldredge

Friday, April 7

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
 Torah Portion – Chol Hamo'ed Pesach, Exodus 33:12-34:26
 Haftarah – Ezekiel 37:1-14

Saturday, April 8

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person
 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom

Wednesday, April 12

10:00 a.m. Passover Yizkor Service – in person and on Zoom

Friday, April 14

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
 Torah Portion – Sh'mini, Leviticus 9:1-11:47
 Haftarah – 2 Samuel, 6:1-7:17

Saturday, April 15

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person
 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom

Friday, April 21

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
 Torah Portion – Tazria-Metzora, Leviticus 12:1-15:33
 Haftarah – Isaiah 66:1-24

Saturday, April 22

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person
 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom

11:00 a.m. Bat Mitzvah of Paige Ringelheim daughter of Brian & Annie Ringelheim

Friday, April 28

6:00 p.m. Mental Health Awareness Shabbat Service—with remarks by Dr. Jennifer Doran PhD – in person and on Zoom
 Torah Portion – Acharei Mot-Kedoshim, Leviticus 16:1-20:27
 Haftarah – Ezekiel 22:1-19
 7:00 p.m. Shabbat Dinner with Post-dinner presentation and Q & A with Dr. Doran, PhD: Mental Health and You: Depression and Anxiety

Saturday, April 29

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person
 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom
 11:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Everett Winter, son of Jeffrey & Lauren Winter



FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY/RABBI SARAH R. MARION

CHOOSING TO BE FREE: REFLECTIONS FOR PASSOVER

What was it that ultimately made those waters part?

Pop culture has gifted us with timeless images of an old, bearded Moses standing at the foot of the sea as a conductor stands before an orchestra: arms lifted, staff in hand, directing the waves to triumphantly rise and then divide. But according to the Biblical text and its accompanying rabbinic midrash, it was actually a little more complicated than that.

The scene begins as Pharaoh's army starts making its way towards the newly freed and highly vulnerable Israelite community. Looking back and hearing the ominous sounds of Pharaoh's horses just a short distance behind, the Israelites cry out

again, just so that God could continue to demonstrate who was *really* in charge. So, it made perfect sense for Moses, at that moment, to turn to God and wait.

I can imagine Moses looking up at God and saying, "Ok God...we're ready...so why don't you do your thing now and save us...please...?"

But by the time the Israelites get to the sea, it turns out that God is done taking the lead. There, in the text, in response to Moses' expectant and impatient glare, God responds with, "Don't look at me! I'm done here. *You raise your staff, and you tell your people, to go forth.*"

Still relying on Moses and God for protection and salvation, the Israelites had not yet discovered a sense of agency, or control, over their own destiny. God would not split the sea until *at least one of them* walked forward and said: "I am not stuck. I am not helpless. I can control what comes next." As Rabbi Shai Held writes, "You can't leave Egypt, not really, until you discover that you can take responsibility for your own life, and affect your own fate. For the Israelites to leave slavery behind, they needed to take their fate into their own hands...they needed to rediscover their capacity to act and make an impact upon the world, and upon their lives within it."

.... Thousands of years later, it is still so easy to convince ourselves that we are helpless, that we are stuck, that we have no control and no way out of whatever personal or communal chaos we may find ourselves in.

to Moses, "Are you kidding?! You took us out of Egypt just so that we could be slaughtered here, in the wilderness? What kind of a leader are you?!"

But Moses remains convinced that God's power and God's protection will prevail.

"Have no fear," he tells them. "Stand by and witness God's deliverance – God will come through."

If there is anything that Moses knows about God by now, it is how much God loves attention. I'll bet that Moses hardly flinched at the sounds of those looming chariots because, up until that moment, God never resisted an opportunity to show off. From blood, to frogs, to locusts, to darkness, to the firstborn, God revealed in the "signs and wonders" that would demonstrate who God really was, and what God was really capable of.

In fact, God *wanted* Pharaoh to say no – God hardened Pharaoh's heart again and

In the meantime, time is ticking, the horses are nearing, and the Israelites are running out of options. The community comes to the sudden, terrifying realization that this moment is, literally, sink or swim. They argue about who will be the first to go in.

In Talmud, Rav Judah tells us about a simple, ordinary man named Nachshon, who sprung forward and descended into the sea before all of the others. Talmud tells us that it was Nachshon who took initiative and rose to the occasion while all of the others lingered. And so, it was Nachshon who moved God's heart; it was Nachshon, and his extraordinary courage, conviction, and faith, who ultimately convinced God to make those waters part.

Slavery sometimes involves a taskmaster and a whip, but being enslaved can also mean accepting and internalizing a narrative of helplessness and paralysis. In this way, when they got to the sea, the Israelites were just as enslaved as they had been back in Egypt.

Thousands of years later, it is still so easy to convince ourselves that we are helpless, that we are stuck, that we have no control and no way out of whatever personal or communal chaos we may find ourselves in. Maybe our own chaos is the negative self-talk that always brings us down, or a difficult or painful interpersonal relationship, or an illness, or injury, or the broader communal and societal systems that seek to rob us of our own human worth and dignity.

But no matter how vast, how ominous, or how overwhelming that sea or that situation in front of us may be, Nachshon reminds us that we always have a choice. At every time, and at every sea, we can choose to remain frozen, convincing ourselves that nothing that can be done, trapped by our own slave mentality...

Or, we can choose to step forward, declaring to ourselves and to the world around us *that it is in our power* to be free.

B'nai Israel Presents: Parent Book Club

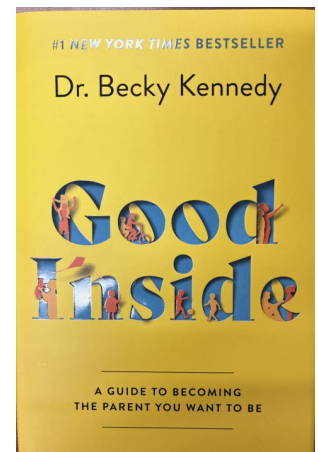
May 10 — 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Becky Kennedy, Clinical Psychologist

#1 New York Times Bestseller

GOOD INSIDE

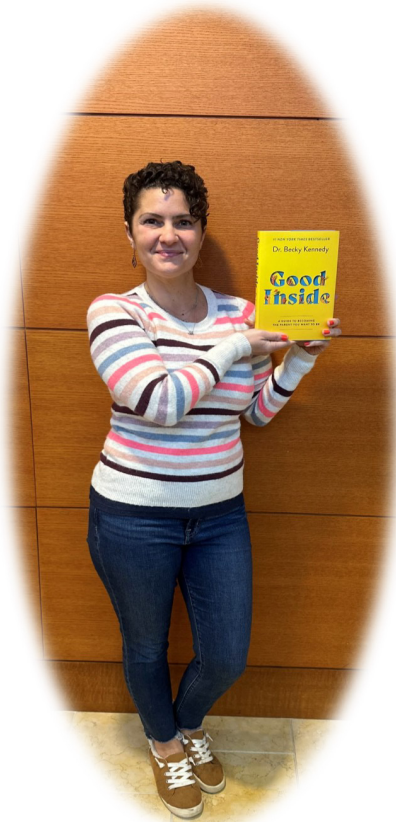
A guide to becoming the parent you want to be



We are very excited to bring this to our community.

The book club is open to all.

PRAISE FOR GOOD INSIDE



"This book is for any parent who has ever struggled under the substantial weight of caregiving – which is to say, all of us. *Good Inside* is not only a wise and practical guide to raising resilient, emotionally healthy kids, but it's also a supportive resource for overwhelmed parents who need more compassion and less stress. Dr. Becky is the smart, thoughtful, in-the-trenches parenting expert we've been waiting for!" — **EVE RODSY, New York Times bestselling author of *Fair Play* and *Find Your Unicorn Space*.**

"Parenting is the most important job we'll ever have and the one we get the least training for, so we tend to follow what our parents did, which often wasn't great. Emphasizing 'connection first,' Dr. Becky offers a new way to parent, sharing clear advice and examples for setting boundaries with love and compassion. *Good Inside* is the book I wish I'd had when I was raising my kids, and I'm so glad they'll have it as they raise theirs." — **RICHARD C. SCHWARTZ, PhD, founder of Internal Family Systems and author of *No Bad Parts*.**

"Dr. Becky is profoundly changing the way we parent our kids and the way we parent ourselves. Her innovative work shows parents how to challenge inherited beliefs and behaviors and shift the paradigm of how we understand family dynamics. Her work is proof that we can be the parents we want to be—and that we are all good inside." — **GABBY BERTSEIN, number one New York Times bestselling author of *The Universe Has Your Back*.**



Please email RROSLER@CBIBPT.ORG
to order a copy and to reserve your spot.

Cost for book \$20.00 — Wine and Pizza will be served

APRIL DONATIONS

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund

Mark Abrams, wishing a speedy recovery to Andrea Goodman after her surgery.

Bonnie Alterman, in memory of Sid Alterman.

Linda & Barry Diamond, in memory of Gale DuBrow, sister of Laura Orr.

Bernice Giblin, with thanks to Rabbi Schultz for his kindness.

Deborah Goodman & David Abbey, in memory of Ruth Goodman.

James Fishman & Carol Merle-Fishman, in memory of Ernest M. Fishman, grandfather of Rabbi Marion, father of Jamie Fishman, father-in-law of Carol Merle-Fishman and great-grandfather of Michaela and Levi Marion.

Michael & Joni Greenspan, in memory of my father, Sidney Greenspan.

Jeff Jacobs, in memory of Freida Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

Beth Lazar, in appreciation of Rabbi Evan Schultz's soulful, beautiful musical abilities and his contributions to the Civil Rights trip group.

George & Samantha Moore, a donation.

Carol & Richard Offenbach, in loving memory of Helene Cohn Offenbach; in loving memory of Sidney Loewith Goldstein.

Laura & Dudley Orr, in loving memory of my sister, Gale DuBrow.

Previn Patel, in fond memory of Dr. Robert and his brother Stuart Sheiman, my long-time friends who brought me into their family and eventually here into B'nai Israel; I shall miss them dearly.

Glen & Kelly Reznikoff, mazel tov Sylvie and Alan Neigher on the birth of granddaughter Marni.

Gail, Tamara, Dustin, Maris & Ariel Schriffert, in loving memory of Edward Schriffert; Missing you on your second yearzeit.

Ellen Sheiman, in memory of Gale DuBrow, sister of Laura Orr, may her memory be a blessing to you.

Roberta Small, in memory of Allan Shumofsky, husband of Claire Shumofsky

Richard & Susan Walden, with thanks to Rabbi Schultz for all that he does.

Howard Weisman & Nina Silberman, in memory of Freida G. Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund
Bonnie Alterman, in memory of Sid Alterman.

Carol Barsky, in appreciation to Rabbi Sarah Marion for her caring and kindness during the illness of Sara Barsky Seaburg, my daughter.

Laurel Greenberg, in loving memory of my terrific husband Hank Greenberg, fabulous father to Susan and Andy Greenberg; in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha; in loving memory of my parents, Ruth C. Silverman and Sol H. Silverman; in loving memory of Dr. Murray and Marilyn Weiner.

Rozanne Chen Lancia, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

Beth Lazar, in appreciation of Rabbi Sarah Marion's inspiring, thought-provoking sermons and her caring ways; in loving memory of Aunt Roz Greenberg; in loving memory of sweet, fun loving cousin Lisa Greenberg, whose young life was cut short by COVID-19.

Richard & Susan Walden, with thanks to Rabbi Marion for all that she does.

Suzanne & Arthur Weissman, in memory of Gale DuBrow, sister of Laura Orr.

Rabbi James Prosnit Legacy Fund

Carol Barsky, in memory of my brother-in-law, Paul Barsky.

James & Lisa Greenberg, in memory of Frieda Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

Martin & Elaine Schwartz, in honor of Dr. Bob Chessin's special birthday.

Rabbi James Prosnit Discretionary Fund

Ellen Sheiman, in memory of Stuart Sheiman.

Music Fund

Jeff Ackerman & Andrea Goodman, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

Marcia Tubin and Martin Shmagin, in memory of Gale DuBrow, sister of Laura Orr.

Endowment Fund

Richard & Susan Walden, a donation.

Enhancement Fund

Dale & Jerry Demner, in memory of Morris Hirsch, brother-in-law of Jerry Demner; in memory of Irving Jakob Demner, father of Jerry Demner.

Jill & Steven Elbaum, in memory of Chris Rocha's mother, Ilona Guman.

Myrna Kaufman, in memory of mother Florence Newman.

Alida & Al Kleban, in memory of our sister Eleanor Levin.

Alice Madwed, in memory of husband Albert Madwed.

Jeffrey & Jacqueline Madwed, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

Susan & James Millen, in honor of the engagement of Linda and Michael Epstein's daughter Jill to Brian Rosenfeld.

Marlene Nadeau, in memory of husband Danny.

Judith Rankell, in memory of my husband, Albert Rankell.

Bonim Preschool Enrichment Fund

Beck & Annie Fineman, in memory of Leslie Fineman.

Nancy & Jeff Oberman, in celebration of the birth of Marni Kaplan, granddaughter of Sylvia & Alan Neigher.

Rabbi Martin Library Fund

Susan Bauchner, in memory of my husband, Burt Bauchner.

Barbara Rifkin, in memory of my parents, Jeanette and Nathan Schine and my great grandmother, Tiba Terry.

APRIL DONATIONS (CONTINUED)

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund

Linda & Brian Barlaam, in memory of Freida Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

Carol Barsky, in memory of my mother-in-law, Jennie Barsky.

Susan Bauchner, in memory of my mother, Bobby Kaplan.

Judith Green & Michael Blumenthal, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

Robert & Elaine Friedman, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

Jack Kadden, in memory of Freida G. Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

Beth Lazar, in appreciation of Rich Walden's d'var Torahs and beautiful singing and chanting; in appreciation of Susan Walden's leadership of B'nai Israel and her work with ADL.

Debra & Daniel Viens, in memory of Frieda G. Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

Gillette Judaic Enrichment Fund

Carol Barsky, in memory of my mother, Virginia Quint.

Joan & Alan Newman, in memory of Elaine Auerbach.

Lee & David Lester Keshet Fund

Mark Kaplan, on behalf of Lee Lester's Estate, a donation.

Yakhani Caring Fund

Andrea & Dennis Feinberg, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

Senior Noon Lunch Talks (Chat & Chew)

Tuesday, April 25 — Susan Walden, ADL overview

Tuesday, May 23 — Barbara Edinberg, Update on CT Legislative Session with emphasis on voting and reproductive rights

Pave the Way at B'nai Israel



We are excited to announce we are bringing back the Pave the Way Campaign!

Many thanks to those who have contributed in the past. Please think about purchasing the lifelong gift of an engraved brick. Not only are you helping to build a more beautiful entrance to the temple, but you are also making a permanent mark by investing in Congregation B'nai Israel. You can simply list your family name or commemorate one of life's simchas — either in the past or near future.

Your choice of bricks:

4" x 8" — \$118 three lines, 20 characters per line

8" x 8" — \$180 eight lines, 20 characters per line

Additional options:

Brick Certificate \$18.00

Souvenir replica brick — \$36.00 with your 4x8 brick purchase
\$54.00 with your 8x8 brick purchase.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Please contact Susie Hallman for information at shallman@cbibpt.org.

Engraving Suggestions:

In Honor of _____

Wedding (marriage) of Ashley and Max Stein, June 1, 2017

The Cohen Family

The Cohens: Andrew, Susan, Jill and Allison

Bar/Bat Mitzvah ofApril 16, 2014

Confirmation of May 21, 2017

In Honor of the birth ofSeptember 19, 2005

25th Anniversary of Steve and Marcy Cohn

You can find more information about our Pave the Way Campaign and download the order form to drop off at the temple office with your payment on our website at <https://cbibpt.org/giving/brick-campaign/>.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact
Susie Hallman shallman@cbibpt.org.

Thank you, in advance, for your generous support.

SPECIAL PURPOSE FUNDS

Congregation B'nai Israel maintains special purpose funds, many of them established by the generosity of our congregants. These funds help support the vital programs and services we offer to our members. Your contribution can also honor the recipient (or their memory) by acknowledging a meaningful occasion or providing compassion during a time in need.



Congregation B'nai Israel—List of Funds

**DISCRETIONARY FUND:**

Rabbi Evan Schultz or Rabbi Sarah Marion.

MUSIC FUND:

Provides musical programming for the Temple.

ENHANCEMENT FUND:

For the general benefit of the temple. Funds programs or equipment through the operating budget that are not specified by any other fund.

VISION LOAN REDUCTION FUND:

Makes periodic additional payments of principal to the loan obtained by the congregation in connection with our construction and renovation project.

RABBI JAMES PROSNIT LEGACY FUND:

Support the future of the congregation by helping to grow the temple endowment funds.

RABBI ARNOLD I. SHER SOCIAL ACTION FUND:

Benefits the general community, the hungry and the homeless.

JUDITH BRAV SHER FUND (Family Education):

Benefits the growth and enrichment of Family Life programming.

YAKHANI CARING FUND:

Provides confidential financial support to our members in need.

RABBI MARTIN LIBRARY FUND:

Provides additional resources to purchase books and equipment for the library.

SYLVIA PROSNIT ADULT EDUCATION**MEMORIAL FUND:**

Funds programs, lectures and teachers for the adult learners in our congregation.

SLEPIAN FLORAL FUND:

Beautifies the Temple through floral displays.

ETZ CHAIM LIVING TORAH FUND:

Provides maintenance and upkeep of our Torah Scrolls.

DANIEL SMITH CEMETERY FUND:

Cemetery beautification.

ARNOLD & DORIS TOWER FUND:

Supports the Temple.

PRAYER BOOK FUND:

Purchases and repairs prayer books. (\$36 minimum for placement of bookplate in the prayer book.)

BONIM PRESCHOOL ENRICHMENT FUND:

Benefits special ECEC programs.

BONIM PRESCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

Provides scholarships for ECEC families based on need.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL ENRICHMENT FUND:

Benefits special Religious School programs.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

Provides scholarships for Religious School families based on need.

CHARLES FRIED KESHET FUND:

Subsidizes students with special needs in our Nursery and Religious School.

LEE & DAVID LESTER KESHER FUND:

Supports ongoing programs for adults with special needs.

THE KESHER PROJECT:

Provides enrichment to local area adults with special needs through creative programming, holding frequent meetings throughout the year to celebrate the Jewish festivals.

BOB & MARSHA GILLETTE JUDAIC ENRICHMENT FUND:

Provides scholarships for our youth to engage in Jewish experiences outside of our congregation.

BIFTY GREENWALD SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

Subsidizes deserving students who attend institutes, conventions and regional conferences of the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY), Reform Judaism's youth movement.

ALAN H. WEINSTEIN SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

Provides scholarships to medical students from our congregation.

JIM & BARBARA ABRAHAM EDUCATION FUND FOR JEWISH LEADERSHIP:

Helps develop future Reform Judaism leaders by providing young adults with a scholarship to attend educational programs, leadership academies, or conferences.

BRIAN MENDELL MEMORIAL FUND:

Facilitates youth engagement.

An administrative fee of fifteen percent, up to a maximum amount of \$75, is deducted from all Special Purpose Fund contributions. This fee defrays the cost of processing the contribution and is added to the synagogue's operating budget.



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The Bulletin of Congregation B'nai Israel is published every month except July.

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Congregation B'nai Israel, founded in 1858, seeks to be a vibrant Reform synagogue dedicated to the perpetuation of Jewish life and values within the framework of contemporary American Judaism. We are a gateway to Judaism for all. The Congregation B'nai Israel Bulletin publishes monthly 11 times a year (except July). To submit an article, announcement or ad to the Bulletin, please contact Co-Editors, Amy Pressman at apressman@cbibpt.org or Lauren Tropp at ltropp@cbibpt.org. Submissions are due by the first day of the month preceding the publication month. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for length or style.

What is *Shmira*?

Shmira is the practice of sitting near—but not in the same room as—the deceased in order to fulfill the Jewish concept of *k'vod ha'briot*, honor of the dead. *Shmira* means “watching” or “guarding” and is a way of caring for someone when they can no longer care for themselves. It is a one-way mitzvah since it can never be repaid. It is a way of honoring the memory of the deceased while connecting to our Jewish heritage and traditions.

At our synagogue, the mitzvah of performing *Shmira* is done for a fellow B'nai Israel congregant. Volunteers sign up for one- or two-hour time slots from 5:00 p.m. until midnight for each day the deceased remains at Green and Sons Funeral Home in Fairfield. If you feel more comfortable taking a shift with a partner, we welcome you to.

The feeling of sitting in a funeral home parlor, particularly after business hours when the silence is palpable, can be a moving and spiritual experience. We are directed to read from the book of Psalms or similar works to reflect. It differs from shiva, since it is very private and not a social event. You cannot help but be affected by the process.

When the B'nai Israel condolence notice of a fellow B'nai Israel member is sent to our congregation, Rabbi Schultz or Nina Silberman notifies the list of *Shmira* volunteers and a sign-up sheet is sent out along with the “*Shmira* Guidelines.” If you are interested in participating in the mitzvah of doing *Shmira*, please let Nina Silberman know. She can be contacted at ninahv@aol.com.

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A CIVIL RIGHTS MISSION REFLECTION

By Louise Bobrow

I have interviewed and recorded more than 500 Holocaust survivors over the previous 30 years as part of my “contribution” to the Shoah Foundation and really thought I had heard it all. However, after our recent Civil Rights Mission to the South, I realized IT’S NOT ALL. Now as I am getting older and I thought wiser, I seem to understand less and less about man’s inhumanity to man.

I grew up during the Civil Rights Protests. I was a teenager. But I am ashamed to say that I had little involvement in it. I don’t even recall my parents speaking about it. I do recall as a child when we took a car trip to Florida seeing signs “For Whites Only.” Did I ask my parents why? I don’t recall, but I doubt it. I went to an integrated middle and high school, but I did not have any friends of color. And I only learned just recently that my elementary school on Long Island, which was totally white and named after a prominent Ku Klux Klan member, finally had its name changed.

When I get questioned, “What was it like to hear Holocaust survivors tell their stories?” I often respond with, “I was a witness to the witnesses.” This is how I felt during this trip as we visited the cities of Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma, and Birmingham, Alabama. Hearing directly from participants and witnesses who lived through these protests, bombings, and utter disrespect for anyone of color was for me the most meaningful and yet appalling experience I have ever had.

Of great impact to me personally was our visit to Selma. The City of Selma seemed to be in the middle of nowhere. Most of the storefronts were closed and boarded up. You hardly saw anyone on the main streets. The hospital, which was once for black people only, was a shell, like it had been bombed out. We heard a first-hand witness account from Lynda Blackmon Lowery who was in the protest and marched over the Edmund Pettis Bridge when she was only about 15 years of age. She was savagely beaten and jailed repeatedly. I watched my middle-aged daughter, Lauren, who was sitting next to me on our tour, as she listened to Lynda talk about her brave experiences and resulting injuries. Lauren was crying her eyes out. The look on her face said it all. It was obvious she had never heard anything like this before.

When we walked over that infamous bridge tracing the footsteps of those who marched in protest over 50 years ago, I still sensed their presence. This city felt haunted to me.

Those souls who are no longer with us still seem to be still crying out: *Don’t forget what happened here. Do Not Forget Us!*

The bridge is in disrepair as is the whole town of Selma. Everywhere I looked, I saw despair, as if this town has been largely forgotten. I still have not been able to shake this feeling off. Ironically, just two days after we left, a dangerous tornado hit Selma and caused widespread damage.

SO, what did I learn from this entire experience? Just as survivors of the Shoah are getting older with each

passing moment and soon will no longer be with us, witnesses and participants of the Civil Rights Movement are also getting older. I hope and wish there is a foundation like the Shoah Foundation that will record their testimonies for future generations to see and hear so this very dark period in our history will never be forgotten. I am a firm believer that if we don’t learn and understand the injustices of history, our past actions will more likely be repeated.

As for suggestions on how we can make our society a more just one: LEARN

“L”— Listen: Everyone has a story that should be heard. Let them know “I hear you.”

“E”— Education: Educate yourself and others. Encourage people to take a tour such as this one.

“A”— Ask questions: What can I do for you? What do you need? Don’t tell people what you think they need.

R”— Respect: Learn to respect what other people have to say even if you do not agree with them.

“N”— Nonviolence: Advocate for social and political changes through acts that do not include physical violence against oneself or others.

One more comment. Billy, our tour guide handed out a button to wear as we exited the bus the last time. It said, “GIVE A DAMN!” I have not taken it off and plan to keep on wearing it.

GIVE A DAMN

“L”— Learn. Always continue to learn. Remember if we don’t learn from our mistakes in the past, history will surely repeat itself!



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BIFTY APRIL 2023

BIFTY is B'nai Israel's high school youth group. We meet on Thursdays from 7:00–8:30 p.m. in the BIFTY lounge. To stay up to date on upcoming events, follow us on Instagram @cbi.bifty and ask to join our text group. Please reach out to advisor Marisa with any questions at munderberger@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you at our next event!

Our April events are:

April 20 — Celebrate Earth Day with BIFTY!

April 27 — Join us for some fun spring activities!

BIFTY had fun at our annual ice-skating program in February!